

Claims

1. A method of resource management, the resource comprising a plurality of servers, each of which is capable of providing a service to a client, the method
5 comprising the steps of:
 receiving a request for the service from the client;
 in response to said request, providing the client with information identifying each of the plurality of servers; and
 selecting, at the client, one of the plurality of servers as the server to be used
10 to provide the service to the client.
2. A method according to claim 1, including the step of providing the client with information relating to the status of each of the plurality of servers.
- 15 3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, including the step of providing the client with information relating to the number of users being served by each of the plurality of servers.
4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the step of selecting a server
20 includes selecting the server in dependence on the number of users being served by each of the plurality of servers.
5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, including the step of providing the client with information relating to a grouping to which each of the
25 plurality of servers belong.
6. A method according to claim 5, including selecting the server in dependence on the grouping.
- 30 7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the step of selecting a server comprises randomly selecting a server.

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8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, including routing the client request to one of the plurality of servers using a DNS round-robin algorithm.

5 9. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein each of the plurality of servers holds information relating to all of the servers.

10. A method according to claim 9, including the step of communicating said information between the servers in real-time.

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11. A method according to claim 9 or 10, wherein the information includes one or more of information identifying each of the servers, status information for each of the servers, information defining the number of users connected to each of the servers and grouping information for each of the servers.

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12. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising requesting a connection to the selected server.

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13. A method according to claim 12, including, in the event that the connection to the selected server fails, attempting to reconnect to the selected server.

14. A method according to claim 13, further comprising, in the event that the reconnection attempt fails, re-requesting the service to obtain the identifying information for servers configured to provide the service.

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15. A client in a client/server system, comprising:
means for requesting a service from a server;
means for receiving information in response to said request, said information identifying each of a plurality of servers which are configured to provide the service;
and

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means for selecting one of the plurality of servers as the server to be used to provide the service to the client.

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16. A client according to claim 15, wherein the information identifying each of the plurality of servers further includes information relating to the status of each of the plurality of servers.

5 17. A client according to claim 15 or 16, wherein the information identifying each of the plurality of servers further includes information relating to the number of users being serviced by each of the plurality of servers.

10 18. A client according to claim 15, 16 or 17, wherein the information identifying each of the plurality of servers further includes information relating to a grouping to which each of the plurality of servers belongs.

19. A client according to any one of claims 15 to 18, wherein the selecting means is arranged to randomly select one of the plurality of servers.

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20. A client according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the selecting means is arranged to select one of the plurality of servers in dependence on one or more of the number of users being serviced by each of the plurality of servers, the status of each of the servers and the grouping to which each of the servers belongs.

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21. A server in a client/server system having a plurality of servers each configured to provide a service, comprising:

means for receiving a request for the service from a client; and

means for sending information to the client in response to said request, said

25 information identifying each of the plurality of servers to the client.

22. A server according to claim 21, comprising a Real-Time Text Protocol (RTTP) server.

30 23. A client/server system having a plurality of servers each configured to provide a service to a client, comprising:

means for communicating information between the servers so that each of the plurality of servers maintains information relating to all of the servers;

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means for receiving a request for the service from a client; and
means for sending server information to the client in response to said
request, said server information identifying each of the plurality of servers to the
client.

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24. A system according to claim 23, wherein the server information further
includes information relating to the status of each of the plurality of servers.

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25. A system according to claim 23 or 24, wherein the server information further
includes information relating to the number of users connected to each of the
plurality of servers.

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26. A system according to any one of claims 23 to 25, wherein the servers
comprise RTTP servers.

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27. A system according to any one of claim 23 to 26, wherein communication
between the servers occurs in real-time.

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